



Truth for Today

February 14, 2021

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Published for the members and guests of the Woodlands church of Christ

Speaking Up for Tamar

by Shane Scott (*reprint from 2017*).

Just this morning yet another celebrity has been fired for inappropriate sexual behavior. The Today show's host, Matt Lauer, was terminated after the investigation of a detailed complaint against him by a co-worker. Undoubtedly more details will emerge over the next few days.

On one level, the recent flood of stories like this is not surprising. We live in a sex-obsessed culture that prizes individual autonomy above all. Given the pervasive corruption characteristic of Hollywood and Washington DC in general, it is predictable that the worlds of entertainment and politics would be filled with gross misconduct – particularly for those who operate in the nexus of those worlds. But what has surprised me is the way some Christians have responded to stories of sexual harassment or abuse, particularly when those stories involve political figures whose ideology they share.

In the last few weeks, I have read (or heard) fellow believers say things like, "Why didn't these women speak up sooner?" or "Why did these women only have the courage to speak up after someone else did?" I've also seen Christians brush aside accusations of inappropriate behavior by rationalizing that there probably isn't a man in politics who hasn't said or done something they shouldn't have toward a woman. I even saw one person on Facebook say that unless a woman is actually raped she should just "let it go." *It is stunning to me that fellow Christians would show far more sympathy to the perpetrators of exploitation than to its victims.*

I recognize that not all accusations are true. Those who are committed to truth and justice should be eager to carefully consider the credibility of any allegations, especially those with such a potential to destroy the lives of the accused. But that is a far cry from dismissing out of hand the report of abuse simply because it came many years after the event, or because it did not rise to the level of a statutory crime.

Such calloused indifference toward those who have suffered harassment or molestation reveals a heartless lack of understanding of the shame and loathing the victims of sexual misconduct feel about themselves. Often, the degrading behavior of the perpetrator is internalized by the victim, who assumes that if something this horrible happened to them, they must somehow be dirty. This is one of the most cruel consequences of sexual misconduct.

The Bible describes just such a dynamic at work in its account of Amnon's rape of his half-sister, Tamar. As Amnon assaulted her, Tamar cried out,
No, my brother, do not violate me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this outrageous thing. As for me,

where could I carry my shame? (2Sam 13:12-13).

And after she was violated, the text says that Tamar spent the rest of her life "a desolate woman" (2Sam 13:20).

So there is a simple reason why many victims of sexual assault do not speak up until years afterward – it may take them a lifetime to process what has happened. Several years ago, my house was robbed. Many of you have experienced break-ins as well. And anyone who has gone through this knows the psychological sense of violation you feel when someone who was uninvited has been in your home. I cannot imagine the sense of violation the victims of uninvited sexual attention/harassment/assault must feel in the most intimate of area of human psychology. That it may take months, years, or decades to confront it is no surprise – the fact that anyone is able to summon the courage to address such a deep wound is astonishing.

Further, in many instances, the victims of sexual misconduct are exploited by people in positions of power, power which they threaten to wield against the victim should she say anything. This was clearly the tactic chosen by Bill O'Reilly and Harvey Weinstein, men whose personal fortunes and powerful connections made such threats far more than empty warnings. And it reveals just how sinister this kind of sexual abuse is. To use a woman for gratification while at the same time threatening her reveals a deeply depraved heart that has twisted itself into complete self-absorption. It is the heinous attitude of Amnon, who – after raping his sister – "hated her with very great hatred" (2Sam 13:15).

What troubles me the most about the unfeeling and unthinking comments of fellow Christians is the impact such dismissiveness may have on those who have been the targets of sexual impropriety. In order for a person who has been mistreated to heal, they must confront the abuse that has taken place, but those who discount the reality or severity of sexual misconduct create an environment in which its victims are discouraged to face their victimhood. This in turn means that the perpetrator will not be confronted, clearing the field for him to prey upon others – as well as shielding the perpetrator from facing the deep strain of evil that has poisoned his heart in the first place.

The tawdry episode of Amnon and Tamar is one of the great blight's in the life of David, who did nothing to make Amnon accountable for his crime. Tamar was left to suffer as a desolate woman in the house of her full-brother, Absalom. One of the most heartbreaking details in the entire saga is the name Absalom gave to his daughter, Tamar (2Sam 14:27), even as he plotted revenge on Amnon. David's refusal to do anything about the violation of Tamar set in motion a season of misery and despair for his family. We must not make the same mistake for the Tamars of our spiritual family.

NEWS & NOTES

UPDATED PRAYER LIST

- **Lyn Ray's** ablation procedure yesterday went well. He's scheduled to come home today.
- **Christy Shows** has pneumonia in her weak lungs. Nathan and boys are better.
- **Stacie Bohanan's** brother, Patrick, is still in ICU but alert and awake as of Wednesday's report.
- **Tonya Clark's** mother Alberta Hurn's ("Burt") test showed the cancer is not in her bones and will not need chemo once radiation treatment is complete. The family is grateful for your past and future prayers on her behalf.
- **Willie Ray's** brother, Lonnie, passed away Wednesday from COVID and cancer. Funeral arrangements are pending. Many thanks and love for prayers from the family.
- **Christy Show's mother**, Christina Robson, remains in Methodist Woodlands, in ICU, and is intubated.
- **Jamie Yancy's cousin**, Grey McKellar, has newly discovered fluid around his heart and decisions will be made quickly about a treatment plan for his fragile condition with a heart pump.
- Past Woodlands Elder **Denny Bray** passed away late Tuesday evening. Arrangements are tentatively scheduled for Saturday.
- **MOMs-to-be: Reagan Reed** (due April 12) and **Alix Randow** (due April 23).

MEETINGS, EVENTS, SINGINGS & STUDIES

- **2:52 Kids Class** [2-12] | Bible Class on First Sundays | TBA
- **TEEN BIBLE CLASS** [12-18] | TBA
- **TEEN HOME DEVO** [12-18] | TBA
- **YOUNG ADULTS HOME STUDY** | TBA
- **ADULTS HOME STUDY** [30/40] | TBA
- **BUILDING STRONG FAMILIES** Bible Class on First Sundays | 3/5, 4:00 p.m. (auditorium)
- **GOSPEL MEETING** with Ed Brand | AND HE PREACHED JESUS TO HIM | 3/28-31
- **VBS** | 6/22-25* (*Tue-Fri)
- **YOUTH LECTURES** with Caleb Churchill & Andy Harrison | 8/7-8
- **GOSPEL MEETING** with Mike Wilson | 9/26-29
- **WOMEN'S DAY BIBLE STUDY** | 10/9
- **MEN'S DAY BIBLE STUDY** | 11/6

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

- **VOLUNTEER SIGN-UPS** See the Monthly Assignments and let Barrett Blankenship know if you cannot fulfill an assignment.
- **Willing to TEACH?** We now need teachers for Spring quarter. **Please contact Brian Clark if you are willing to teach.**
- **WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE?** See Leo Betancourt about the Barnabus group.
- **HOSPITALITY?** Maureen Chegin and Cecelia Neel will coordinate food for members who need assistance during an extended recovery period after surgery or for the family at a funeral.

- **WORKDAY/WORKWEEK** | February 25-27 | We need people who could climb scaffolding, ladders, repair dry-wall and ceiling paint, and help with tasks on the floor. Each day's tasks will be different so check in with George Chapman if you can help either Thursday, Friday and/or Saturday and the times that you can help.

DIRECTORY UPDATES

- Contact Brian with updates or if you need a PDF of the directory.
- We are excited to announce that Garrett Gage will be joining us this summer for the preacher internship we have renewed for 2021. You can find him on Facebook.

THROUGH THE NT IN 2021

FEBRUARY

- 8 | Acts 10
- 9 | Acts 11
- 10 | Acts 12
- 11 | Acts 13
- 12 | Acts 14
- 13 | Pray and reflect
- 14 | Pray and reflect

Attendance	In Person Average Last Month	Virtual Average Last Month	In Person Last Week	Virtual Views Last Week
Sunday Classes	70	24	85	12
Sunday Worship	98	51	119	27
Tuesday Adult Class	6	12	8	3
Wednesday Classes	58	25	63	9

SUNDAYS	10:00 AM-2/14	10:00 AM -2/21	CONTACT INFORMATION
Foyer 1-Welcome	Craig Preuss	Dwight Haas	Elders
Foyer 2-Ushering	Leo Betancourt	Jonathon Chandler	Keith Arrants 936.499.2812
Song Leading	Alan Stilts	Norman Davis	George Chapman 832.764.2151
1 st Prayer	Harvey Goble	Ross Randow	Norman Davis 832.326.2966
Scripture	Paden Reed	Chris Chapman	Don Hooton 936.443.6230
Scripture Reading	Acts 13:43-52	James 1:12-16	Deacons
Communion Lead	Jay Dulin	Troy French	Adam Bohanan 281.798.1093
Preaching	Don Hooton	Don Hooton	Brian Clark 281.513.0706
2 nd Prayer	Les Cockrell	Michael Henss	Gary LeBlanc 281.292.0262
Announcements	Barrett Blankenship	Brian Clark	Craig Preuss 832.477.0578
Sanitize-Bathrooms After	N/A	N/A	Evangelists
Sanitize-Pews After	N/A	N/A	Don Hooton 936.443.6230
Building Open/Lockup	Haas	Bohanan	Website
Sound 1	Chris Latson	Chris Latson	www.woodlandschurchofchrist.org
Communion Prep	G&L Chapman	G&L Chapman	Office Phone
Counting Contribution	Norman Davis-Willie Ray	George Chapman-Chris Chapman	281.367.2099
WEDNESDAYS	7:00 PM-2/17	7:00 PM -2/24	Church Email
Song Leading	Leo Betancourt	Adam Bohanan	woodlandschurchofchrist@gmail.com
Invitation/Talk	Dwight Haas	Hayden Clark	
Prayer	Timothy Chandler	Lyn Ray	
Announcements	Norman Davis	Troy French	